

NUMISMA.

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THE CURIOSITY CABINET.

Published by WM. P. BROWN dealer in Postage and Revenue Stamps, Coins, etc., 145 Nassau street, New York,

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NUMISMA.

ED. FROSSARD, IRVINGTON, N. Y.

Editor and Proprietor.

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ON A DRACHM OF CORINTH.

They found me in a Celtiberian mine,
And carried me to Carthage, and to Tyro;
And purified me by the strength of fire;
And wrought me, till my metal, white and fine,
Rivalled the snow which sees the bright sun shine
Along the crests, that in mild air aspire
To reach those heights, where famed Apollo's lyre,
Sooths the vast gods with melodies divine.
Next for some Samian wine they bartered me,
And made me in a coin, and stamped thereon
The face of Venus; and one sunless day,
Old Homer held me, sitting by the sea;
But those grand years are to oblivion gone,
And all my honor passed with them away.

THOMAS S. COLLIER.

My September 17th sale contains a large number of very fine and rare American and Foreign Silver and Copper Coins, Luther and Masonic Medals, Siege Pieces, etc. Buyers who have not received a catalogue from other quarters will please to notify me, while, on account of the great demand for this catalogue, I must beg those who may have received more than one copy, to return me their duplicates at once.

THE 1879 METRIC SETS.

Our ever wide-awake Philadelphia correspondent, in a letter under date of the 4th ulto., makes use of the following language: "*But for the notice of your last number there would be to-day 500 sets on the market. Now 350 will probably be melted up.*" This is indeed good news, and shows that the influence of Numisma, when battling for right, is felt even in high quarters. From a careful perusal of the following correspondence, our readers will be able to form a tolerably accurate

appreciation of the causes which led to an issue of these pattern pieces in 1880, and of the methods of distribution employed.

As regards the employes of the U. S. Mint at Phila., it is evident, from the tenor of both letters, that they had nothing whatsoever to do with the sale of these pieces, and we fully exonerate them from the implied charge of participation. The game was played with Dr. Hubbell, the patentee of the coinage, as chief wire puller, an imbecile House Committee, a docile mint director, and a mint superintendent, who, we are sure, yielded to the positive orders of his superiors against his better judgment. Col. Snowden should have responded to the order for more sets, by simply throwing the dies in a pot of acid, or ordering them melted up. That would have settled the matter forever, prevented much scandal, and given the House Committee, in the observance of their own rules, a lesson they needed much, and which, in season, might have borne good fruits. Inflexible firmness in enforcing well established and just rules, honors a public officer more than blind acquiescence in the unlawful wishes of those clothed with brief authority.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENCE OF "NUMISMA."

U. S. PATTERN COINS.

THEIR ILLEGAL ISSUE AND SALE, AND THE INEFFECTUAL EFFORTS OF NUMISMATISTS TO CHECK IT.

PHILADELPHIA, August 17, 1880.

The readers of Numisma recollect, perhaps, that the catalogue of my third public coin sale, Dec. 7, 1878, contained the following note in regard to the Standard Dollar Patterns issued in 1878:

"These patterns form but another leaf in the disgraceful story of the mismanagement of the United States Mint. In other countries, the Mint is the centre from which numismatic knowledge emanates. In this coun-

try the Mint abhors numismatic interests. It serves to coin money, to be run as a political machine, and to be abused by a certain class of its officials. It is a rule of the Mint, that patterns shall be sold only during the year of issue, but this year the sale of the Barber-Morgan dollars was refused by the Mint, while the officials, in a clandestine manner, sold these patterns at enormous prices. Patterns forming a part of the numismatic progress and the history of coinage of a country, should be sold by the Mint to numismatists in limited numbers. As long as this is refused, there will be fraud and disgrace."

When the attention of ex-Governor Pollock, then Superintendent of the Philadelphia Mint, was called to this note, he fell into considerable passion, and instructed the Chief Coiner, Major O. C. Bosbyshell, to call upon me and ask a formal public withdrawal of my charge, threatening, in case of refusal, with legal proceedings.

The Chief Coiner laid particular stress upon my use of the word "officials," which according to his interpretation referred exclusively to the Superintendent and the three or four other principal "officers" of the Philadelphia Mint, a limited interpretation, which I did not intend, and could not admit. Are Clerks, or Assistants to the Officers, or the gentlemen connected with the Mint Bureau at Washington, not "officials?"

At the very moment when I met the Chief Coiner, I had in my possession four Pattern Coins which I had the right to sell for \$50, and which came from a gentleman, whom I considered then, and consider now, an "official" of the U. S. Mint!

I found, however, that the word "officials" was indeed considered as synonymous with "Officers," and that outside parties tried to make political and personal capital of my charge. But I did not intend to fight men whose personal integrity I had no right or

reason to doubt. I wanted to fight the system. And so I addressed the following letter, which explains itself:

PHILADELPHIA,
TIMES BUILDING, 12-5, 1878. }

Hon. Governor Pollock, Superintendent U. S. Mint, City:

DEAR SIR:—Referring to my interview with Major Bosbyshell, I beg to state that I used the word "Officials" in my note to lots 414-15 of my coin catalogue in a general sense, meaning not the "Officers," but simply any parties connected with the U. S. Mint.

Whoever knows me, knows that the note in question was not prompted by any personal or political consideration, but that I acted simply as Numismatist in the interest of Numismatists and Numismatics. What I said has been repeated again and again by gentlemen of highest integrity of Boston, New York, and this city, and the sale or offering of recently issued patterns could be proven by numerous witnesses.

It is perfectly true that the Chief Coiner has no control over pieces as soon as they leave his hands, but just because he cannot prevent other parties, who get patterns, etc., as official presents, as acts of courtesy, or in any other way, to sell such pieces at unfair prices or in an unfair manner, this ought to be an additional reason to issue and sell such patterns in the regular way like Proof Sets and Medals.

Very Respectfully Yours,

S. K. HARZFELD.

This ended the matter so far as I was concerned. Shortly afterwards Governor Pollock was removed from the Mint, and Colonel A. Loudon Snowden appointed as Superintendent. Mr. Snowden had been in former years Chief Coiner, and it was repeatedly claimed that while he occupied that position regular coins and pattern pieces to an amount

THE JEFFERSON DAVIS MEDALET.

A malicious and asinine quidam having originated and spread the rumor that the Jefferson Davis Medalet, of which a copy was offered at our sale April 3d last, (248) is of recent speculative origin, we have taken pains, though perfectly satisfied that the statement was entirely unfounded, to make inquiries in various directions. Among the answers received is the following, the original of which was presented by us to Mr. Thomas Warner, Cohocton, Steuben Co., N. Y., the purchaser of the medalet at our sale :

BEAUVOIR, HARRISON CO., MISS., }
30th June, 1880. }

ED. F., ESQ., SIR :—

I recognize the medalet of which you sent me a description in yours of 25th June, to be one of those struck in Paris, France, both in gold and silver, and regret that I cannot furnish you any more specific information.

Respectfully yours,

JEFFERSON DAVIS.

COIN SALES.

July 20, 21, and 22d. Ancient and Modern Gold, Silver, and Copper Coins, the property of Mr. Herbert Steinman. 1500 lots. Catalogue by Scott & Co. Sold at Leavitt's Clinton Hall, New York.

July 29th. The collection of American Coins of the late Charles A. Durand, Esq., of Norwalk, Conn. 698 lots. Catalogue by Messrs. H. P. Smith and H. G. Sampson. Sold at Bangs & Co., New York.

July 29th. American Coins and Medals. 277 lots. Catalogue by Mr. S. H. Morgan. Sold by D. F. Henry, at Pittsburgh, Pa.

August 9th and 10th. United States and Foreign Coins, Paper Money, etc., the property of Mr. John E. Burton, of Geneva Lake, Wis. 1197 lots. Catalogue by Mr. J. W.

Haseltine, Phila. Mr. Haseltine has issued a printed price list of this collection which can be obtained from him at 25 cents per copy. Sold at Bangs & Co., New York.

August 28th. Sale by Mr. J. W. Haseltine at Bangs & Co., N. Y. On account of going to press at an early date, we must leave detailed notice till our next number. We have in fact not yet seen a catalogue of this sale, and it may possibly have been adjourned to a later date.

COMING SALES.

ALL AT BANGS & CO., NEW YORK.

Sept. 1, 2, and 3d. The American collection of Wm. J. Jenks of Philadelphia. Catalogue by W. E. Woodward. An important sale.

Sept. 9 and 10. The American collection of Mr. W. W. Thurston, of Wellsville, N. Y. Catalogue by S. K. Harzfeld. Contains many desirable coins.

Sept. 17. The collection of Mr. A. Reimers, of San Francisco, Cal., contains many rare Foreign Silver Coins, Luther and Masonic Medals, rare American Coins. Catalogue by Ed. Frossard.

Sept. 28. The collection of Mr. H. C. Birch, of Phila. Contains rare American Coins, Continental and Colonial Paper Money and Fractional Currency. Catalogue by Ed. Frossard.

Oct. 5, 6, 7, 19, 20 & 21st. A large collection will be offered by Mason & Co., 143 No. Tenth Street, Philadelphia. It is said that the catalogue will number 6000 lots and that 1000 will be sold at each session, an unusually large number, especially if the coins offered are of value and rarity. Catalogues of this sale have been placed in our hands. We shall be pleased to forward, *on application*, copies to those who wish to bid through us.

the succeeding sets ranged from \$50 a set down to \$12.50.

I give the above facts, knowing them to be true, and being able to prove them. I repeat, I am not fighting persons. It makes no difference to me, if the Director of the Mint is from Ohio, or hails from Zululand, if his name is Smith, Jones or Brown. But I want it understood—and I trust every honorable numismatist will join me in this—that the coin business is a legitimate and honorable business, and coin collecting a legitimate and honorable pursuit, a study, and a branch of the fine arts, and I claim for coin dealers and collectors the same rights and privileges that are accorded to any political adventurer and bummer, “if he knows where and how to apply.”

S. K. HARZFIELD.

PHILADELPHIA, July 14, 1880.

DEAR SIR :—My attention has been called to a notice in your paper, “The Numisma,” under the head of “Metric Pattern Coinage 1879,” which does injustice to the officers of the mint here, and I feel it my duty both to you and them to set you right.

You say in the conclusion of your notice that “the price at which a restrike may be had depends entirely upon the question how badly parties in the Mint, etc., who were presented with them need money.”

The history of the striking of this coinage I have taken the trouble, with some difficulty, to obtain, and find the facts are as follows.

In the latter part of 1879, the Director of the Mint, at the instance of the Coinage Committee of the House, directed the Superintendent of the Mint to prepare 15 sets of the Metric, Stella and Goloid Coinage for the inspection of that Committee. Subsequently 100 sets in addition to that were ordered by the same Committee, and again subsequently 300 sets were ordered. Of the latter, 150 sets still remain in the Mint in this city, and

about 50 sets in the office of the Director at Washington. Of this whole number of pieces struck, but 4 sets are in the possession of the officers of the Mint, and I may add here that striking these pieces was very much against the judgment of Col. Snowden, Superintendent of the Mint in this city. The order to strike came from the Coinage Committee, and overrode the rules with regard to striking prices of the year before. The action of the Committee was ill-advised and is presumed to have been dictated by Mr. Hubbell who is the patentee of this coinage, and who desired as large a number of pieces struck as possible, so as to familiarize the public with his patent.

The insinuation contained in your article “that the price of patterns would be regulated by the wants of persons in the Mint to whom this coinage was presented,” will, from a review of the facts I have given you, prove to have been quite an unjustifiable reflection against the character of the Mint officials. Your informant, whoever he may be in this city, has evidently made a mistake in this particular case. The sets sold and offered for sale came through Congressmen, each of whom was entitled to a set. Many gave their orders to outsiders who entered into a speculation in their sale. Under the present management of the Mint here, the greatest care is exercised to prevent unlawful issue, speculation or favoritism.

I have taken the trouble of correcting this statement more in the interests of truth than of anything else.

I am very respectfully yours,

JOHN W. HASELTINE.

ITEMS OF INTEREST.

Lieut. Thos. S. Collier, U. S. Navy, gives our readers in this number, another one of his charming numismatic sonnets.—Our November number will contain an original

of \$20,000, had been restruck of the genuine dies.

The Philadelphia Times of January 6, 1879, gave publicity to this charge, and scores of leading journals reprinted that article. It was never denied or corrected. I do not want to be understood, that Colonel Snowden was a party of, or knew at the time of this fraudulent issue. But he could have prevented it by the safer keeping of the old dies, which as I understand it, was part of his duties as Chief Coiner.

But all this was a matter of the past, and when Col. Snowden was appointed Superintendent of the Philadelphia Mint, I hailed it with sincere pleasure. He has a thorough knowledge of everything connected with mint affairs, had just proven to be a model Post Master, and was liked and esteemed by all who know him. I believed that he would inaugurate a new era in Mint matters. If the Mint merely serves to coin money, and to be run as a political machine, he has done so. But how as to the numismatic part?

The following facts speak for themselves:

In 1879 twenty sets of the Metric Patterns were issued, to be submitted to the members of the Committee on Coinage, Weights and Measures. In March of this year a collector of this city showed me one of these sets, asking me what he could pay for it. I thereupon wrote to a gentleman of the Treasury Department at Washington, and received, dated March 24, the following reply:

"The Metric sets are in great demand. I know of a gentleman offering \$60 for a gold dollar alone. I have a set, for which I would not, however, take \$100. . . . At the time I obtained my set I could not procure one even from the Director of the Mint and a friend, well qualified to judge of such matters, told me that they will be very valuable."

Sub April 14 the same gentleman informed me, however:

"I find that Dr. Hubbell has induced the Committee on Coinage to authorize the Director of the Mint to have struck 100 more sets. This will make about 120 sets in existence. I do not know whether this has become public yet or not."

My surprise may be imagined when I learned shortly afterwards that, besides these 120 sets, 300 additional sets had been ordered and struck;—that they were officially offered to Members of Congress and personal or political friends on payment of the intrinsic value (\$6.10);—that these official notifications were used by friends of those to whom they were addressed;—that the Clerks of the Washington Departments had severally 3, 6, and more sets which they openly offered for sale;—that sets were found in the hands of boarding house keepers, and that the Stella gold coins may already be seen—pierced—as ornaments in possession of women of the "demi-monde" at Washington.

During all this time the respectable coin dealers and collectors could not get any of the sets at the Philadelphia Mint and were forced to negotiate for them with parties "who knew how to get them."

Will anybody deny that this is a shame and a disgrace? Has any honest Numismatist not the same right than a concubine, who happens to have an influential friend?

And I ask, whose fault is it; that of Director Burchardt, or Superintendent Snowden?

The printed rules of the Mint, and even the coinage law, prohibit the striking and sale of Coins and Pattern Pieces "after the year of their date," and "the dies shall be defaced at the end of each year." Yet 400 sets of the Metric Patterns, bearing date 1879, were struck in 1880. Of these 250 sets found their way in miscellaneous hands; 150 sets are still in the vaults of the Mint. Of the original 20 sets, a few were sold as high as \$100,—to Numismatists. The prices for

Oct. 13, 14, 15 & 16. The American Collection of Ferguson Haines, Biddeford, Maine. Catalogue by W. E. Woodward. We have already spoken of the value of this collection, the result of 20 years collecting. It may be stated that the collection contains every regular issue of the American Mint in silver and copper, except the 1804 dollar. We shall take bids for this sale, but catalogues must be obtained from W. E. Woodward, Roxbury, Mass.

Nov. 15 & 16th. Part II of Prof. Anthon's Cabinet. Our Nov. No. will contain a more detailed notice.

VOL. V, OF NUMISMA begins with the January No., 1881. To all those who besides their own subscription, will send us 50 cents for a second copy, to be sent to any given address, we will forward postpaid, a handsome historical premium medal, size 32.

HOW IT LOOKS IN PRINT.

If Mr. Woodward thinks that he has found the boss speller in Pennsylvania, he is mistaken, we think. The following beats his man easily, and the original bore the postmark MASS., suggestive of literary attainments, highest culture, etc.

—Jeune 8t 1880

Mister froasard if yr stil bi kones mi boi cum acros afn peni that wos dug eout thispring herbouts it hus a plane dat 1787 and a hed letrin lik Con or sumthing likit on totther cide he sais hed likter sel if yr ofer is enuf ter bi sumthing he wants mi naber shoed me yr papur ples find posteg stomp for rpli

LIST OF NAMES OF COLLECTORS.—Mr. Woodward having apparently given up the

idea of publishing a list of Collectors of Coins throughout the U. S., Numisma is ready to take it up. We would, in fact, have begun to publish such a list, in parts, long ago, had it not been on account of the fear that many of our best collectors would not wish to see their names in print in such a list. Having consulted a large number of collectors on this we find that the objections are very few, while many think such a list would be of very great use and interest. In our January number we propose to make a beginning; asking in the meanwhile for an expression of opinion on the part of some of our friends.

THE 1794 STARRED CENT.

The lucid explanation of the origin of the chain of small stars on the reverse of certain varieties of '94 cents given by that eminent numismatist R. C. Davis, Esq., of Philadelphia, was first published in Mason's Numismatic Visitor for July. As we were about going to press when the article was received and had no time left to enter into direct correspondence with Mr. Davis, we took the liberty of embodying the article in our concluding remarks on the '94 Starred Cents in last number of Numisma. Our thanks are due to Mr. Mason for reminding us of our promise to give him credit for the same, which we hereby do with due apologies for our previous unintentional neglect.

Of course, since the stars were already stamped upon the old rejected planchets when put to use in 1794, it follows that the chain of stars may in some cases be found on the obverse as well as reverse; and since a large number of dies were used, it also follows that the stars may be found on several varieties. Since the happy discovery of Mr. Davis, the starred cent cannot, in fact, any longer be considered as a distinct variety. It becomes simply an oddity, an interesting peculiarity and nothing else.

article on "Church Tokens," by one of the best known American collectors.—Mr. W. E. Woodward closes his catalogue of the famous Jenks collection with an able article on American numismatic periodicals. Thanks for praises bestowed on Numisma.—Bro. Harzfeld is out with another of his lists. Send for it, enclosing stamp.—Mr. H. G. Sampson sent us one of his large lists of gold, silver and bank notes, giving current values in U. S. coins of all Foreign coins; also list of prices paid by him for U. S. silver and copper coins. Very useful.—Mr. L. F. Montanye, 64 Barclay St., New York, has one of the finest collections of U. S. and colonial coins, pattern pieces, etc., in the city, and is continually adding rare and valuable specimens to the same.—The editor of Numisma has just completed the revision of his list of Centennial Medals, which may or may not be published in catalogue or book form. The list embraces probably from 450 to 600 different medals and tokens, and the descriptions are in all cases from original specimens mostly in the cabinets of Messrs. Wm. Sheldon, John W. Haseltine, or the author. The list embraces quite a number of pieces, the existence of which is unknown to collectors, and the medals will be numbered by size, beginning with the original Commission Medal, size 64, and ending with "the Pigmy" size 8. Suggestions and new information on the part of collectors of Centennial Medals are now in order and will be welcome by us.—While east lately on a pleasure trip, we had the pleasure of making the personal acquaintance of Mr. Wm. Sheldon, of Worcester, Mass., the happy possessor of the finest collection of Centennial Medals in the U. S. Also of Mr. Richard O'Flynn, the original old coin man of the same place. Both of them gave us a very hearty greeting.—At Boston we met our ever light-hearted and lively friend, John C. Schayer, Esq., who still firmly believes that

alligator hides and old coins are the trump cards of his existence. A very pleasant afternoon was also spent by us in the sanctum of Lorin G. Parmelee, examining coins, talking coins, and doing a little trading. Mr. Parmelee showed us a 1793 chain cent, (Monograph Plate 1, No. 3,) with a plain edge, bought by him in a chance lot of old coins. Baked beans and old coins are his motto. We then called at the Roxbury Apothecary, but Mr. Woodward had taken his flight to some distant quarter in search of a few more old coins. Drugs and old coins keep his grazing fields green.—In the Liberal Freemason for Sept. will be a long article suggesting formation of cabinets of Masonic medals, etc. Since the publication of Mr. Marvin's magnificent work on Masonic medals, considerable interest in the subject has been awakened among Masonic writers on both sides of the Atlantic, and Collectors of Masonic medals have increased.—The attention of buyers of numismatic works is called to the very fine selection to be sold at our sale Sept. 28th.—One of the most perplexing questions which present themselves to the mind of a professional compiler of coin catalogues, is how to distribute them so as to reach the largest possible number of buyers. In a future article we propose to discuss the subject as well as several other questions concerning coin sales—from an independent point of view.—Since a certain party began to absent himself from coin sales, no more petty thefts of coins have been committed. At one time these were so common as seriously to embarrass both auctioneers and buyers.—Our E. C. and learned reviewer, the distinguished proprietor of the Journal of Philately, of Seltz's Infant Mimic Stage, and of the Coin Collectors's Journal, circulation 50,000, (Mr. W. wickedly suggests that the three last ciphers be dropped) was one of those present at the late Smith and Sampson's sale. His presence lent great dignity and interest to the occasion and to his kind patronage, in buying, at very high prices, all of a certain class of coins which common collectors generally reject, much of the great financial success of the sale is attributed.